

back to the long procedures and cost of acquiring all necessary documents to run their shops successfully.

- Limitations on the weight of goods imported was also frequently mentioned as one of the main challenges for wholesalers, traders and importers. Since most of the importers do not import only fish, they complained of the limits put on the amount of goods they can bring into South Africa, as it reduces the profitability, diversification and growth of their businesses. Traders mentioned being legally allowed 500kg of goods into South Africa per trip, which to them is not sufficient to cover the cost of one trip. Anything above that is not accepted without paying customs duty on it. These restrictions are enforced by SARS and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS). It is worth noting that the 500kg does not apply to fish only, but also to all other food items such as beans, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, palm kernels, etc. that the importer is carrying.
- In addition to the cost of making a trip outside South Africa to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria or Mozambique for business, traders/shop owners also complained of having to bribe some officials at the borders to be able to import their goods into the country. This is also the case even after the documents required had been cleared by officials from the South African Revenue Services (SARS), DOH and DAFF.
- Traders and importers also complained of long queues and laborious procedures at the Beit Bridge border. Their supplies have to be dismantled and it takes a lot more time to re-pack them after inspections. After inspection, traders have to move from one official to another from the different government offices to pay for permits.
- Both shop owners and traders reiterated that governments are not doing enough to facilitate the trade of fish and other goods between neighbouring countries. The flow of fish and other food items from other African countries into the Cape Town Metropolitan area is hindered by tedious procedures, which force some of the traders and shop owners to resort to informal methods of doing business.

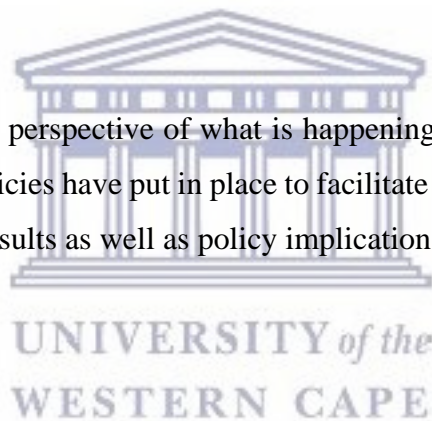
4.14 Conclusion

This chapter presented detailed findings from the field work that was carried out for the study. It provided insight on the types, forms and origin of fish from other African countries, sold in the Cape Town Metropolitan area. The chapter also analysed the means by which this fish is brought into South Africa and the specific routes that are used for transportation. The chapter

elaborated on the different routes that are used as well as the costs incurred by traders and shop owners in transporting this fish to its final destination. It reviewed costs incurred in running specialised shops. It then investigated the nationalities of shop owners as well as the consumer base for imported products,

The chapter presented a detailed list of the types, forms, origin and prices of the fish sold in specialised shops. It also presented pictures to demonstrate how the fish is packaged and displayed for customers. These pictures showed that the fish is packaged and displayed in different ways for various reasons, which will be elaborated upon in the discussion chapter. Results also revealed the price variations in the fish sold in these shops, and why consumers still preferred buying more expensive fish rather than cheaper fish and fish products. Lastly, the chapter outlined and analysed the documents needed for running a food shop as well as importing food into South Africa, as well as the challenges faced by shop owners and traders in getting these documents.

This chapter presented a clear perspective of what is happening on the ground as opposed to what national and regional policies have put in place to facilitate the trade in fish. Chapter Five will discuss and analyse the results as well as policy implications regarding trade in fish.



5 CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents discussions on the results in Chapter Four. The chapter discusses whether regional and national policies put in place facilitate the trade in fish or not, as well as South African national standards in relation to imported fish. It also discusses the routes used to get fish into Cape Town and why they are used, as well as the costs incurred in importing fish. The chapter then analyses why this fish is sold in specialised shops by foreign nationals to their consumer base and considers the consumer factors that influence the attractiveness of imported fish. It discusses issues pertaining to packaging and display of fish in relation to sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The chapter also elaborates on the challenges faced by shop owners and traders and the policy implications thereof.

5.2 Facilitatory role of regional trade agreements

Despite the fact that regional trade agreements have been ratified by SADC member states, at the regional and national levels to facilitate intra-regional fish trade, this study identified irregularities in the implementation of these agreements. At the regional level, Article 16 of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries (2001) proposes the following:

- The promotion of trade and investments in fisheries by reducing barriers to trade and investment.
- Establishing of common positions with regard to sustainable trade, eco-labelling of fish products and other fish-related issues relevant to state parties.
- Cooperation in establishing regional capacity to implement internationally acceptable standards on quality control and certification of quality.

The SADC Protocol on Trade (1996) is in line with the Protocol on Fisheries. It aims to provide for the elimination of all import and export duties as well as all non-tariff barriers to intra-regional trade. The Protocol on Trade (1996) also stresses that member states must take the necessary measures to facilitate the simplification and harmonisation of trade procedures and documentation. In addition, the protocol emphasises that sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures shall be based on international standards and guidelines in accordance with the WHO. The SADC recognises the importance of fisheries in economic and social well-being as well

as livelihoods for the people of the region, in contributing towards poverty reduction and food security. South Africa is a signatory to the SADC protocol, yet limits are still placed on imports. South African standards such as the NRCS do not contain imported dried, smoked and salted fish resulting in problems of acceptability. These standards should not be used as a regulation to restrict the import and sale of the products. Malawi, DRC, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique are all source countries for imported fish as well as signatories to the SADC Protocol. In signing this protocol, member states agreed to harmonise their domestic legislation regarding trade related issues including fish and fish products.

Although member states have signed agreements to facilitate the trade in fish, harmonising regional standards to national standards may take years to implement and domesticate, because moving past removal of barriers to the next stage of deeper integration has been slow. RTAs continue to be negotiated amongst member states; these member states may have signed regional agreements but do not necessarily implement them in their countries. This could be due to various reasons, such as:

- The unequal distribution of gains and the absence of compensation mechanisms has hampered progress in harmonising standards among member states. As a result, the import and trade of fish in the region continues to be hindered.
- The great diversity across Africa such as resource-rich, resource-poor, coastal and landlocked countries as well as different ethnic groups and languages translates into different interests and policy preferences. As a result, the supply of public goods, especially food, through the adoption of common regional policies, is hindered.
- Economic unification would require a political union. The reluctance of African leaders to encourage the eradication of national sovereignty and the emergence of supra-national authority hinders the coordination and management of affairs at the national and regional levels (Melo and Tsikata, 2014).
- Lack of harmonisation of fish standards within the SADC region remains a problem.

5.2.1 South African national standards regarding imported fish and fish products

Regarding national regulations in South Africa, NRCS strictly controls and manages the import of fish and fish products through various compulsory specifications. NRCS emphasises its obligation by law to inspect all products, including frozen fish and canned fish, as part of its mandate to promote public health, safety and ensure fair trade (NRCS, 2017). The inspection

process comprises a microbiological testing and a physical examination. Testing is supposed to be carried out at the borders by a sampling procedure, but due to lack of facilities and personnel, it is not being carried out (Jimu, 2017). NRCS has laid down specific requirements that must be adhered to regarding importing fish and fish products into South Africa; packaging and labelling, quality composition and processing/handling facilities of fish and fish products. To this end, compulsory specifications and standards have been set for the following fish and fish products according to Act (No. 5 of 2008):

- Canned fish and canned marine molluscs.
- Frozen fish and frozen marine molluscs.
- Frozen prawns and langoustines.
- Frozen rock lobsters and frozen lobster products derived from them.
- Canned meat.

Most of the fish imported by traders and shop owners is not included in the national standards outlined by NRCS. For instance, there is no mention of smoked catfish, dried crayfish, dried stockfish heads or even salted tilapia. Consequently, compulsory inspections should not be done on these products, if there are no standards for the fish and fish products sold there. Shop owners therefore cannot be penalised for not meeting standards which do not exist in the first place. However, most of these traders are not aware of the existence of these policies meant to facilitate trade in fish, or the fact that most of the fish they import into South Africa are not included in national policies, standards and legislations. In addition, some shop owners and traders are living in South Africa illegally, hence their unwillingness to pursue their rights because they fear exposing themselves to immigration authorities and end up being deported to their countries of origin. At Park Station in Johannesburg, traders who sell fish on the streets run away and abandon their merchandise when inspectors show up. This is for fear of being apprehended about their immigration status. Traders would prefer to abandon their fish on the streets and lose the merchandise than to be caught with no legal immigration papers. These factors tend to scare away traders and shop owners from exercising their rights through the existing standards legislation and regional agreements that have been put in place to facilitate the trade in fish.

5.2.2 Harmonising fish standards in the SADC region

Steps have been taken towards harmonising fish standards in the SADC region by SADC standards and WorldFish (WorldFish, 2016). The outcome is a document with proposed technical specifications regarding a harmonisation project for fish standards for the SADC region. The document contains general product specifications that require further development, discussion and agreement among member states. The harmonisation concerns some of the following ten standards:

- Standard for canned sardines and sardine-type products.
- Specification for dried freshwater small pelagics.
- Standard for farmed tilapia (bream).
- Specification for fresh and frozen whole finfish.
- Standard for fresh and chilled fish.
- Standard for quick frozen fish fillets.
- Standard for smoked finfish, smoke-flavoured finfish and smoke-dried finfish.
- Standard for salted fish and dried salted fish.
- Standard for fish sausages.
- Specification for fish snacks (crackers from marine and freshwater fish, crustaceans and molluscan shellfish).
- Good aquaculture practices for bream (tilapia) farming/culture.

The document also includes technical specifications for a number of fish products such as salted and dried salted fish, smoked fish, smoked flavoured fish, canned sardines and sardine-type products, fresh and frozen whole finfish. Elements of the SADC Protocol on Free Trade (SADC, 1996) have been extracted and elaborated upon. Some of the elements include elimination of barriers, elimination of import duties and export duties, non-tariff barriers, national treatment and customs procedures. Article 5 of the Protocol stipulates the simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures; member states shall develop a single customs document for all intra-SADC customs procedures for members that have ratified⁹ the Protocol.

⁹ Signing or giving formal consent to a contract, treaty or agreement making it officially valid. In this case, the single customs document will only be effective for member states who have given their formal consent.

Although the groundwork to facilitate the trade in fish has been put in place regionally and nationally, much still remains to be done in terms of harmonising standards and for member states, not only to include it in their trade policies but also to implement these standards. The elimination of barriers as well as import and export duties amongst member states of the SADC as stated in the Protocol does not tally with the reality on the ground. From the challenges highlighted by traders and shop owners in Chapter Four, border officials do not enforce the regulations that have been put on paper to facilitate the trade of fish. They tend to implement vigorous procedures that hinder rather than facilitate the trade and smooth flow of goods, specifically fish, into South Africa. Procedures such as long and tedious processes in acquiring import documents as well as the dismantling of traders' supplies at every point of inspection, which takes a long time to pack. In terms of weight restrictions enforced on traders, border officials do not implement standards according to Article 7 of the SADC Protocol on Trade (SADC, 1996). Article 7 states that members shall not apply any quantitative restrictions on imports from other states, except as otherwise provided for in this Protocol. Efforts to facilitate trade regionally and nationally will be in vain if member states do not take their roles seriously. Therefore, in terms of whether regional and national policies facilitate the trade of fish, the study concludes that these policies play a more hindering than facilitatory role.

The newly signed TFTA between COMESA, EAC and SADC presents a great opportunity to cover these new fish products that are imported from other African countries. Member states need to come to an agreement where these products are included in their food and hygiene standards, as well as to ensure that standards are implemented in importing and trading in fish.

5.2.3 Documents required to import and trade fish in South Africa

In line with regional agreements and national standards, there is a list of documents required by shop owners/traders to import and trade in fish as well as run a food premises. A list of general documents required for imports into South Africa as well as more specific documents required to import fish are also highlighted. An import permit was issued by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) accompanied by a letter from the country of origin indicating that the export of products are approved. Article 12 (Part 3) of the SADC Protocol (SADC, 1996) which talks about the rules of origin stipulates that, claims for acceptance of place of origin have to be supported by a certificate given by the exporting member state. In addition, the importing member state shall not prevent the goods from entering the country solely on the grounds of not providing a certificate, provided the goods are not subject to prohibition. Shop

owners and traders who travel to buy and import fish find it very difficult to acquire the certificate from the exporting country, especially if it is not their home country. It takes close to a month for the application to go through and the inspection to be completed before the certificate is issued. Shop owners and traders who do not get the certificate through the legal route bribe their way through the borders of the importing country, in this case South Africa.

According to the Hygiene Requirements Act 54 (1972), shop owners are required to have a Certificate of Acceptability for running food premises. Traders are required to display this certificate in a conspicuous manner in the shops for the information of the public. This was the case in most of the shops visited. Other documents required to run a food shop include a business registration permit and a tax clearance certificate. Overall, only five (25%) of the shop owners interviewed had the above documents. The other 15 shop owners had one or two of the three documents required to run their shops. Shop owners with bigger shops who are also involved in wholesaling had all the required documents in place, while most of the shop owners with smaller shops and fewer who imported food did not have all the required documents. Shop owners/wholesalers with bigger shops would record huge losses if they did not ensure that they had the required documents. This is because they buy wholesale and sell to other shop owners; not having all required documents to run their shops and import would mean closing the shop and losing huge amounts of money in the process. Shop owners/retailers would rather make sacrifices and go through the laborious procedure of acquiring documents or bribe their way through, than risk not being able to fully run their businesses, let alone being closed down.

5.3 Retail of imported fish in specialised shops

Specialised shops are run by foreign nationals from countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Nigeria, DR Congo, Cameroon, Mozambique, Malawi and Rwanda. These shops are called specialised shops because most of the food items sold in these shops are imported from the countries listed above, for a specific consumer base. The consumer base for these specialised shops are more or less from the same countries listed above. South African nationals go to these shops to buy provisions such as rice, chicken and cooking oil. Generally, South Africans do not own or run such specialised food shops. This is because the specialised shops sell mostly food items from other African countries. It is also the reason why these are mostly owned and run by nationals from those countries. The owners of these specialised shops are familiar with what they are selling, as well as their consumer base. The specialised shops in the Cape Town Metropolitan area are clearly a unique invention by foreign nationals to cater for foreign

nationals. The exceptions found during the study was a South African sales girl who worked in one of the Nigerian-owned shops.

5.4 Routes used to get fish to Cape Town

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the channels used for importation of fish and fish products into Cape Town. Three formal channels were identified, namely the Beit Bridge and Lebombo border posts as well as the Durban Port. Some shop owners and traders travel to the source countries to bring fish as well as other food items by bus, which are mainly destined for Johannesburg Park Station. From there, they connect using buses or trucks destined for Cape Town. Most of the fish from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique is sold to retailers in Johannesburg around the Park Station area (Jimu, 2017). Thus, many retailers from Cape Town go to Johannesburg to buy fish for the shops from the wholesalers who bring the fish from the countries mentioned above. Some retailers in Cape Town congregate their orders together and use a truck owner to buy the fish for them from Johannesburg. A number of traders from Nigeria and Cameroon transport their order by sea using container vessels to Durban Port where these are then collected and transported by road to Cape Town.

Transportation is done by bus and/or cargo trucks because in the former case, most traders use passenger buses which are the most efficient way of travel within the region. Also, most of the informal traders that bring fish from the region are women practicing informal trade and who use passenger buses to bring in fish as passenger luggage. Secondly, it is cheaper to use trucks where these can be found as in most instances, these trucks are coming to South Africa mostly empty to collect imported goods from the sea ports in South Africa, which are the main channels for the import of goods for most of the land-locked countries in Southern Africa. In such cases, the arrangements to transport fish to South Africa using such trucks are made between the truck driver and the trader without the knowledge of the truck owner/company. Almost no fish is transported by air, except in cases where people are bringing in small quantities (less than 40kg as passenger luggage) using for example, cooler boxes, suitcases, etc. Other instances include students travelling from Nigeria and Cameroon who carry small amounts of fish for personal consumption. Transporting supplies by air would be very expensive in terms of covering costs and traders would barely be able to break even in terms of getting a profit. Only one informant said that he travelled by air between the DRC and South Africa to go and buy fish in the DRC, but his supplies were then transported by road.

Traders tended to resort to informal practices¹⁰ for importing their goods to avoid the long checks at the borders and also because they do not meet the requirements in terms of documents and baggage allowance. Informal practices afford traders the opportunity to import as many kilograms of supplies as they can possibly transport without being sanctioned. The reason why informal practices are used by traders even though they are transporting food for consumption is because weight restrictions are also applied to food. Therefore, there is a certain amount of weight they are allowed to bring into the country on one trip, which is 500kg of supplies. Anything above that is liable to a fine which must be paid at the borders. Note that 500kg also includes other food items, not just fish. These food items usually include beans, rice, groundnuts, cooking oil, maize meal, etc. Traders often resort to bribing border officers to get their excess goods through the borders rather than abandon them there or pay heavy fines and record losses. It is worth noting that the fines paid for not adhering to rules and bribes received, may not necessarily be paid into government coffers. They most likely always end up in the pockets of individual officials.

These practices are contrary to what is stated in Article 7 of the SADC Protocol on Trade (SADC, 1996) which states that quantitative restrictions shall not be applied on imports from member states, except as otherwise provided for in the Protocol. Article 14 also highlights trade facilitation at length. It states that members shall take all measures necessary to simplify and harmonise trade documentation and procedures. Article 15 emphasises the need for free transit trade. It further states that member states shall enjoy freedom of transit within the community and shall only be subject to payment of normal rates for services rendered. Therefore, border officials tend to carry out practices that do not reflect what is on paper thereby contributing greatly to hindering the trade of fish across borders, rather than play a facilitatory role.

5.5 Key costs incurred by shop owners and traders

Shop owners in the Cape Town Metropolitan area incur certain expenses in running their shops. Some of the key expenses include rentals, transportation and bribes paid to municipal officials. One shop owner pays R2500 a month for a shop he rents to sell his supplies. He buys his supplies from Johannesburg, so he pays an average sum of R1200 to transport them to Cape Town. Regarding transportation within Cape Town, he said that he spends R500 a week for

¹⁰ Practices such as travelling through different routes other than the formal borders to avoid weight restrictions.

errands such as buying supplies from other shop owners and paying bills. Bribes related to not having required documents could cost up to R1500 a month. All these costs ultimately amounted to R5700 for major expenses. Not forgetting that miscellaneous items may come up along the way, meaning the expenses for each month could be more or less than the above amount. This however, does not include their monthly income.¹¹

The above expenses raised uncertainties regarding the profitability of running a specialised food shop, as to whether shop owners make enough profits after all expenses to sustain themselves and their families. However, a key interviewee reported that he makes profit from the business and he intends to expand in the near future. As indicated, shop owners do not only sell fish and fish products in their shops. They also sell other food supplies such as rice, beans, palm oil, cooking oil, vegetables, cocoyams, sweet potatoes, plantains, etc. These other food items ensure diversity of products and improve the profitability of the business as a whole. Shop owners said that if they were to sell only fish in their shops, they would not be able to run profitable businesses.

5.6 The types and forms of fish imported into South Africa for sale in specialised shops

There is a variety of fish forms and species imported into Cape Town. Amongst this imported fish are mlamba, usipa, ndakala, kapenta, crayfish, stockfish and bitoyo (see Table 3). These are imported in a variety of forms such as smoked dried, salted dried and simply sun dried. These forms can be attributed to a number of reasons. Firstly, so that the fish can last longer in the case where they are not bought immediately by customers. For instance, it was indicated that the smoked dried calabash fish from Nigeria could last for six months without going bad, if well smoked. The heat and smoke from the fire keep the fish dry and strong, therefore it remains preserved for a longer period than when it is fresh. Salted dried fish can also last for very long periods, as salt is a powerful preservative for the fish and it keeps maggots and rodents away from the fish. Even then, smoked and salted fish is usually stored in the freezers because if it is stored outside for too long no one buys it.

Being able to preserve the fish for longer periods does not guarantee its suitability for human consumption. Consumers may buy fish that has been stored for very long periods without being aware of whether it is safe for consumption or not. It is also imperative that health officials take

¹¹ Wages after all expenses have been deducted.

regulations. Therefore, shop owners cannot be sanctioned for not complying with hygiene standards that do not exist. Except where minimum standards have been set for the packaging and display of all fish including imported products, then shop owners who do not comply with those minimum standards, could be sanctioned accordingly. It is therefore evident that standards and requirements guiding the handling and display of foodstuff (Act 54 of 1972) is not implemented on the ground. Good practices could be drawn from the EU food safety policy, according to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Compulsory food checks ought to be carried out throughout the entire value chain (from boat to plate), making sure that fish is of a high quality and appropriate for human consumption. In the European Union, strict rules are enforced throughout the food chain and as a result, EU citizens benefit from one of the highest food safety standards in the world. The SADC countries will need to move towards similar levels of standards and enforcement of these.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results of the study, applying the facilitatory role of regional trade agreements *vis-a-vis* South African national standards regarding importing fish and steps taken in harmonising fish standards in the SADC region. There is a link between the challenges faced by fish traders and shop owners and the policies that are meant to facilitate the trade in fish. As a result of these policies and standards not being implemented effectively, traders and shop owners are hindered from fully reaping the benefits of this trade which is a source of income for them. The goal of reducing poverty through fish trade will not be achieved unless traders and shop owners are able to reap the benefits of regional trade agreements and local South African standards.

The chapter also discussed the types and forms of fish imported and considered the reasons why the fish is brought into South Africa in these different forms as well as the reasons why certain routes are used to transport fish into South Africa and then to Cape Town. Fish imported from other countries is mostly not included in South African standards specifications hence regular inspections cannot be effectively carried out on specialised shops, which means that Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards are not being upheld by these shops.

It is evident from these discussions that there is a need for the harmonisation of regional policies as well as specifications and standards regarding fish. Although the groundwork for harmonising fish standards in the SADC region has been set, member states still have a big

role to play in making sure standards are effectively implemented in their respective countries since they have been ratified. Differences in policy preferences, different interests and the quest for national sovereignty among member states present a hindrance to the effective implementation of trade agreements. Chapter Six will present insights on discussions from this chapter as well as concluding remarks and recommendations for possible policy reforms.



6 CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Initiatives and interventions have been carried out, and some are underway to promote and boost fish trade especially intra-regional trade in sub-Saharan Africa, in order to contribute to sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation as well as food and nutrition security. So far, national and regional policies on intra-regional trade as a whole have been put in place to facilitate the movement of goods between countries. Even then, Africa still faces challenges in enhancing fish trade. The study has outlined some of the challenges at the regional level as well as the national level in terms of cross-border and retail fish trade.

The study deliberated on the themes that emerged from the findings against the policies that have been put in place. The study evaluated the policies and legislation by asking how these facilitate or hinder the trade of fish across borders for traders and retail trade for shop owners.

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section provides insights on key findings from the study. In the second section, concluding remarks are presented in relation to the study objectives and the main research question. The study proposes possible lessons to be drawn from the integration process in the EU and provides recommendations based on the study findings in the last section.

6.2 Insights derived from the study

A large number of policies to boost the trade in fish regionally already exist. The SADC Protocol on Free Trade (SADC, 1996) provides a framework for enhancing SADC intra-regional trade and the SADC Protocol on Fisheries (SADC, 2006) aims to provide for the elimination of all import and export duties as well as all non-tariff barriers to intra-regional fish trade. Regardless of all the existing policies and regional agreements to promote intra-regional fish trade, there is no effective implementation and monitoring of these policies and agreements on the ground. Member states do not have a common approach to ensure agreements are implemented and standards are maintained. Coordination and harmonisation of policies and agreements at country and regional levels would go a long way in boosting cross-border fish trade and alleviating the problems that plague the international fish trade and negatively impact people who are trying to earn a living from this economic activity. Although SADC standards

and WorldFish Center are currently working on a document on proposed fish technical standards for harmonisation in the SADC region, this is still a long way from fruition since it is still at project proposal stage. Mechanisms for implementing and enforcing these standards as well as the stipulations of the SADC Protocol on Trade will need to be domesticated and operationalised by all member states. This means the NRCS will have to include imported fish and fish products on its list for standards and specifications. Although it may take a long time for member states to harmonise, domesticate and operationalise standards in their respective countries, there is at least hope that intra-regional trade could be enhanced once these are in place.

This study has shown that traders use both formal and informal routes to import fish into South Africa, as well as documentation of all such imports. Formal routes include importing fish through the Beit Bridge and Lebombo borders, as well as the Durban port. Using these formal channels is complex and time consuming in terms of numerous police checkpoints, laborious procedures and bribery of officials, which adds to traders' transaction costs. Hence, most traders avoid these formal channels in favour of informal channels to evade these procedures and extra costs. One major reason that traders use informal channels, is so that they can evade the limit on volume of goods that they are legally allowed to import into South Africa, tax-free per trip. Informal routes are also used to avoid paying bribes to border officials. Policies, standards and regulations will need to be formulated in a way that could promote intra-regional fish trade including their effective implementation. The need for using informal routes could decrease if border procedures were not laborious and time consuming. This is particularly the case regarding the import of highly perishable food such as fish whereby member states need to ensure that consumers are eating fish that is fit for human consumption and is handled hygienically throughout the value chain.

Sizeable amounts of fish are imported into Cape Town from other countries. Fish is imported in different forms such as smoked dried, salted dried, sun dried and salted. These different forms ensure that fish is easily transported from one country to the other and that it can last for long periods. However, preserving fish for long periods does not guarantee its suitability for consumption. It is therefore imperative that health officials carry out regular inspections to ensure that fish in specialised shops are in a good condition for consumption. They should go as far as taking fish samples for testing to ensure high food standards and consumer safety. If

both health officials and shop owners comply with existing fish standards and specifications, consumer health safety will be assured.

Fish is also packaged and displayed in different ways in the shops depending on the size, type and form of the fish. Most methods of packing and displaying fish reflect what is happening and practiced back home in most of the source countries. Fish is also put into packages of different sizes which are sold at different prices. This is done so that consumers are able to buy according to their means. Most shop owners package and display their fish in their shops just the way it is done in their home countries, by hawkers and traders. However, standards and specifications will have to be harmonised in a way that is inclusive of all these different fish forms from other countries as well as the way they are packaged and displayed, but based on minimum South African or SADC standards (where these are applicable) and also international best practices for food safety and hygiene.

Imported fish is more expensive than local fish. This is as a result of added costs for importing the fish from countries outside South Africa into the Cape Town Metropolitan area. Consumers preferred buying this imported fish from their home countries because they are more familiar with the fish and they had been eating the fish while growing up. Other consumers use imported fish to cook certain meals which can only be prepared with fish from their home countries. The price of the fish was not a deterrent for these consumers. This was also closely linked to the reasons why most consumers buy their fish from shop owners who come from their own countries. Nigerians would mostly buy fish from Nigerian shops while Congolese consumers will generally buy fish from a Congolese shop owner. These shops are usually stocked with fish and other food items from the respective countries of the shop owners, hence the reason why the shops attract consumers from the same country.

Specialised shops are run by foreign nationals from countries outside South Africa. These shops are called specialised shops because most of the food items sold in the shops are imported from other countries such as Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Zambia, DRC, Malawi and Nigeria. The trade of fish in specialised shops is a unique practice. This is because they target foreigners who know and understand the kind of fish they sell as they grew up eating it. The consumer base has more or less the same nationalities as the shop owners. South Africans go to specialised shops to buy provisions such as rice, chicken, tomatoes, cooking oil and potatoes.

Generally, South Africans do not run specialised food shops because these sell mostly food from other African countries, which they are not familiar with.

Running specialised shops is a business that generates profits for shop owners and traders. Despite all the costs incurred for rentals, transportation, bribes and other miscellaneous costs, shop owners appear to make some gain from it at the end of the day, to continue with the ventures. If it was not the case then most of them would not be continuing or even planning on expanding their businesses. The specialised shops do not sell only fish. They sell other food supplies, which help to boost the profitability of the business. Owning and running a specialised shop is a means of livelihood and source of income, and probably one of the lucrative economic activities for the migrant communities in South Africa. The trade further contributes to economic growth through employment for both local and foreign nationals and also the fishers and traders from the source countries of the fish. Given that Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the poorest and most food insecure regions of the world, increased consumption of fish contributes significantly to food and nutrition security. Thus, cross-border trade provides for significant social and economic gains for the traders, shop owners as well as consumers.

6.3 Possible lessons to be drawn from regional integration in the EU

The EU is one of the best examples of regional economic political integration, with free trade within its common market being the hallmarks of its integration. The region has experienced periods of crisis such as the Eurozone crisis, which prompted the economic integration between the European Union and the Eurozone. This union brought to light the European principle which states that it is a lot harder to integrate than to disintegrate. Externally, the EU has exhibited a track record of reliability and stability with its economic partners, both within the EU and globally. In all, the literature reviewed suggests that the EU has greatly evolved after its sovereign debt crisis. As a result, it is a more integrated single market now than ever, especially through its banking union.

This study has attempted to draw lessons from the EU economic integration, in particular how this underlays cross-border trade and product standards within the common market, for Southern African regional trade based in regional trade agreements that act as the basis for economic integration. Regional groupings such as the SADC and its SADC Protocol on Free Trade (SADC, 1996) could emulate some aspects of integration from the EU. Some of the key aspects that could provide lessons are for example, domestication of EU legislation,

harmonisation of product standards and strict enforcement of these policies and standards across the Eurozone. In addition, the SADC and other African RECs should start by prioritising trade within the RECs and then with each other at Africa level as a move towards development of the continental free trade under the proposed African Economic Community. Regional groupings will need to increase and strengthen intra-REC trade and inter-REC trade if Africa is to start closing the economic gap with other continental bodies and also use such economic integration for increased political and economic stability.

6.4 Concluding remarks

This study set out to achieve the following main objective: to investigate whether regional trade agreements and national standards facilitate or hinder the trade of fish across borders. It also investigated the routes used to import fish into South Africa as well as the types, forms and species of fish imported. Consumer factors influencing attractiveness of imported fish was central to discussions in this study as well as the reason why imported fish is packaged and displayed the way it is in the shops. The main question was to find out what constraints and opportunities shop owners and fish traders faced in importing fish into South Africa and selling it locally.

The study investigated how fish is imported for sale in the Cape Town Metropolitan area, what kind of fish is imported, who imports the fish and who buys the fish. In addition, the study interrogated what legal and food standards documentation are required to sell fish in the Cape Town Metropolitan area and what kind of policies and legislation have been put in place (or have to be put in place) for this kind of trade to thrive. The focal point of this study was to investigate the constraints that shop owners/traders face in doing this trade. The study found that there were a number of challenges faced by these shop owners and traders, and that there were loopholes in the existing policies and legislation that would need to be rectified to facilitate and enhance trade in imported fish within the Cape Town Metropolitan area. Based on the findings of the study, a number of recommendations, which could feed into regional and national policies and legislation regarding cross-border and retail fish trade are proposed.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Regional and national policies and standards on free trade need to be harmonised

All SADC member states that are trading in fish as revealed under this study, (South Africa, Malawi, DRC, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe) are signatories of the SADC Protocol on Free Trade (SADC, 1996). Although member states have ratified the treaty (only the DRC has not ratified the treaty), findings of this study show that member states do not adhere to the provisions of the treaty. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that member states do not just sign and ratify agreements but ensure that these are domesticated and operationalised in their respective countries.

6.5.2 Simplification of procedures for acquiring documents for running shops

The procedures to acquire documents required to run a fish shop nationally (in South Africa) need to be simplified. Municipalities need to come up with a more simplified way for shop owners to obtain the documents they need to run their shops. It takes over a month for shop owners in the Cape Town Metropolitan area to apply for a business licence, and several more weeks for inspections and re-inspections before the licence is granted, not to mention the other documents required.

6.5.3 Inclusion of standards for handling of all forms of fish and fish products

Currently, some of the fish and fish products form that are being imported into South Africa are not included on national legislation. National and regional standards and specifications for handling of all fish and fish products should be updated to cover fish types and forms from all importing and exporting countries. This would enable health officials to carry out their inspections effectively, to ensure that maximum hygiene standards are upheld.

6.5.4 Contamination of fish through poor handling

The handling of fish throughout the value chain needs to be improved. For example, the handling of unpackaged fish by consumers may cause contamination, that is, some consumers hold unpackaged fish with their bare hands, which they end up not buying. To avoid contamination, consumers should be provided with gloves in cases where they handle different fish before making a choice of what fish to buy. Equally, hygiene practices should be strengthened throughout the value chain.

6.5.5 Restrictions on quantity of imports

Quantitative restrictions (500 kilograms per trip, per importer) applied at the borders are a hindrance to cross-border trade. Article 7 of the SADC Protocol (SADC, 1996) prohibits quantitative restrictions on imports from other member states, except as otherwise stated in the Protocol. Border officials should ensure that this policy is effectively implemented to allow for the free movement of goods across borders.

6.5.6 Improved functioning of border infrastructure and personnel

Border infrastructure such as testing laboratories, and processes need to be improved to curb the demand of bribes by officials. There is a need to set up structures that do not promote bribery and corruption at border posts. In addition, there is shortage of staff in the various departments concerned with facilitating import and export of food items at the border. There is a need therefore to boost the required and adequately skilled staff at the borders. Traders should be able to maximise the profits gotten from importing and selling fish locally, rather than making losses through additional costs.

6.5.7 Simplification of border procedures

Long and laborious border procedures hinder the movement of people and goods across borders. Article 15 of the SADC Protocol (SADC, 1996) allows for the free movement of goods and people within the community, only subject to the payment of normal rates for services rendered. Time consuming border procedures should be replaced with one-stop border posts and free movement of goods as stated in the Protocol. Initiatives such as the Chirundu one-stop border post between Zambia and Zimbabwe should be implemented across the region and eventually continent-wide. Since implemented in 2009, the Chirundu one-stop border post has been hailed as a notable success and an important step towards greater integration in the SADC region.

6.5.8 Monitoring and enforcement of regional agreements and treaties

National and regional monitoring and evaluation structures should be created to measure the effectiveness of regional treaties and agreements and policies on the ground and whether these have been domesticated and are being operationalised. Such a unit should also assist member states in the implementation of such agreements and policies rather than only policing and enforcing these. In addition, follow up mechanisms would go a long way in ensuring that what

is on paper is implemented on the ground in terms of importing and selling fish regionally, nationally and locally.

6.5.9 Improved documentation of informal cross-border trade

Informal cross-border traders should be viewed as a partner and contributor to the economy. There is a need to improve documentation of the volume and importance of the informal fish trade. Also, this type of trade should be properly acknowledged in policy-making platforms. Ways should be found in facilitating informal trade rather trying to kill it since it is the largest sector in the region. It is only when informal traders gain confidence in the formal structures and there is adequate provision of appropriate infrastructures that informal traders will formalise their activities.

6.5.10 Raising awareness and organisation

Awareness should be raised among shop owners and traders about the SADC Protocol and how the Protocol protects their activities. There is a need for shop owners and traders to organise themselves into associations and unions that can engage with national governments and push for their rights in the trade activities they carry out. Traders should raise these issues with the authorities concerned in their home countries. This would enable negotiations between South Africa and concerned countries, around trade facilitation at the borders and the retail sector in the Cape Town Metropolitan areas.

6.5.11 Recognition of shop owners as investors

Member states from where the shop owners of the specialised shops originate, should negotiate with South Africa around legalising shop owners and traders as investors/business people using existing legislation. After all, South African supermarkets such as Shoprite, Game and Pick & Pay are establishing their activities in these other countries as investors. Rules and regulations around investment (for example, minimum levels of size of investment for recognition as an investor) and trade permits should be flexible for these shop owners, especially since most are from SADC and should be covered, particularly under the SADC Protocol. Reduced thresholds for qualification as investors would go a long way in facilitating and legalising the activities of the shop owners.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of interviewees

Dates interviewed	Location of shop	Name of shop	Shop owner/Nationality	Contact details
2/5/2016	Maitland	African shop	Mrs Chimene Forbi. Cameroon	N/A
19/5/2016	Bellville	J. Marlene trading cc.	Mr Ojong Bernard. Cameroon	0834035654
19/5/2016	Bellville	Blessing African food and spices	Mrs Blessing. Nigeria	0717631129
19/5/2016	Bellville	Food and spices	Mr Emeka. Nigeria	N/A
20/5/2016	Parow	African spices	Mr Fidelis. Cameroon	N/A
20/5/2016	Parow	Grace Africa shop	Mr Victor. Nigeria	0827934595
20/5/2016	Parow	Aruza pro limited	Mr Emmanuel and Irene Lubasa. Congo and Zambia	0796388252
27/5/2016	Parow	Chez Papa Alain	Alain Kazadi. Congo	0717631128
27/5/2016	Parow	Food shop	Mantobi Asemota. South Africa	N/A
2/6/2016	Maitland	African raw organic food	Mugabe. Cameroon	0717241348
2/6/2016	Maitland	Bibiche shop	Madame Bibiche. Congo	N/A
7/6/2016	Maitland	Sobem African food spices	Elias Aka. Nigeria	0824791083
7/6/2016	Maitland	K.milungu	Cecile Milungu	N/A
3/8/2016	Salt River	Super gambela shop	Derrick. Nigeria	0823111143
4/8/2016	Salt River	Gilbert fish and eggs	Josephine Ndayambaje. Rwanda	0730833852
4/8/2016	Salt River	Kamu la fraicheur	Mr Kamu. Congo	0766686938
Government Officials				
Date of interview	Location	Name of official	Name of office	Contact number
23/5/2016	Stellenbosch	F. Endemann	DAFF	0748700522
23/5/2016	Stellenbosch	Thabo Sefike	DAFF	0218285102
13/2/2017	Cape Town	Anonymous	City of Cape Town	N/A

13/2/2017	Mitchell's Plain	Anonymous	City of Cape Town	N/A
13/2/2017	Mitchell's Plain	Anonymous	City of Cape Town	N/A



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Appendix B: List of other products and food items sold in the shops

Name of shop	Other food items sold in the shops
J.Marlene trading cc.	Rice, beans, plantains, bananas, okra, soft drinks, palm oil, Maggi cubes, garri, Kanda (cow skin)
Blessing African food and spices.	Garri, semolina, maize meal, pounded yam powder, rice, plantains, kanda (cow skin)
Grace Africa shop	Garri, semolina, pounded yam, eru, ogbono, ground egusi, Maggi cubes, palm oil, groundnuts, plantains, scented rice
Aruza pro limited	Groundnuts, beans, pepper, Maggi cubes, butter nuts, barbeque spices, dried caterpillar
Alain Kazadi. Congo	Eru, frozen chicken, Maggi cubes, African spices and condiments
Food shop Ltd	Cocoyams, okra, Maggi cubes, bananas, maize meal

African raw organic food	Garri, plantains, bananas, sardines
Sobem African food spices	Garri, okra, beverages, pounded yam powder, semolina, maize meal, Maggi cubes, plantains
K.milungu	Beans, scented rice, cooking oil, fresh pepper, assorted vegetables
Super gambela shop	Smoked chicken, fragrant rice, pounded yam powder, maize meal, plantains, frozen chicken, a variety of beans, palm oil, green spices, ginger, garlic
Gilbert fish and eggs	Eggs, tinned tomatoes, sunflower cooking oil, groundnuts, spaghetti, chicken and fish spices, peanut butter, salt, Maggi cubes
Kamu la fraicheur	Tinned tomatoes, eru, garri, bottled water, fragrant rice, maize meal, baking flour, beans, kitchen utensils, cleaning detergents, fish and chicken spices and ingredients, canned baked beans

Appendix C: Pictures of other items sold in specialised food shops



Figure 16: Taken in Salt River. August 4 2016.



Figure 17: Taken in Salt River. August 4 2016.



Figure 18: Taken in Maitland. August 3 2016.

Appendix D: Other pictures of fish sold in the shops



Figure 19: Unpackaged and unlabelled smoked tilapia taken in Parow. May 20 2016.



Figure 20: Frozen maasbanker in a deep freezer taken in Parow. May 20 2016.



Figure 21: Packaged and unlabelled small pieces of smoked dried catfish. Displayed on a shelf. Taken in Bellville (2016).



Figure 22: Smoked catfish and sun dried tilapia openly displayed on shelf. Taken in Bellville (2016).



Figure 23: Dried salted tilapia fish held by shop owner. Taken in Bellville (2016).



Figure 24: Frozen panga in a deep freezer. Local fish taken in Salt River (2016).



Figure 25: A big piece of packaged and labelled catfish. Taken at Bellville (2016).